



Department of  
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor

Michael B. Colbert, Director

August 15, 2012

TO: PCSA Directors and Onsite Review AFCARS Coordinators

FROM: Jennifer R. Justice, Deputy Director  
Office of Families and Children

SUBJECT: AFCARS Onsite Review and Resources

As most of you know, Ohio's first federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) onsite review is planned for the week of August 20th, 2012. Three counties (Franklin, Guernsey and Madison) are sending staff to participate in the review. During the past month, 34 counties/agencies collaborated with many state staff to send 110 hard copy files to the onsite record review location (ODJFS Lazarus Building). Please extend my appreciation to all local and state staff members who are supporting one another with this work.

While we look forward to completing the onsite review, we know it is the beginning of multiple efforts to improve statewide data integrity. Federal reports (AFCARS, NCANDS, CFSR, NYTD and visitation) are increasingly used for measuring statewide performance as well as potential financial penalties and/or federal reimbursement calculations. Federal reports are important to our understanding of the effectiveness of child welfare practice efforts and the needs of our system at large. We continue to look for ways to provide information that is meaningful and helpful to frontline staff in their ongoing work effort.

**AFCARS Improvement Needs**

We expect the review will highlight improvements we need to make on multiple fronts, including:

- Statewide consistency for interpreting AFCARS related policies and data entry practices
- Strengthened SACWIS edits to ensure required data elements are entered (particularly race, client characteristics, prior adoption history, foster family structure, etc.)
- Modified AFCARS data entry workflow to better support local business practices

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### **Upcoming AFCARS/SACWIS Changes**

We are excited about the following additional AFCARS support changes coming in SACWIS Build 2.1 (targeted for August 23, 2012 release): *AFCARS Field Indicators on SACWIS screens* and an *AFCARS View Only Page* to show all AFCARS foster care and adoption elements in one place. These changes will help staff identify missing key information needed for AFCARS federal reporting. A knowledge base article to highlight these changes is underway and webinars will be scheduled, to review enhancements (along with other AFCARS review findings), shortly after completion of the onsite review.

### **AFCARS Webinars/Training Resources**

Three federal AFCARS training webinars are available at the following link <http://vimeo.com/45713668> and are also posted on the SACWIS knowledgebase <http://ifskb.com/sacwis>.

The webinars include:

- “AFCARS: Removal Episodes”
  - A presentation given to Tribal IV-E Grantees on May 15, 2012
- “AFCARS and Placements”
  - What is a "placement" (AFCARS vs. Your Agency)
  - Placement count vs. Placement date
  - Reporting population (refresher)
- “AFCARS Diagnosed Conditions “, from the 2012 AFCARS Webinar Series, presented on July 10, 2012.

For those of you who are interested in guidelines for the AFCARS onsite review, additional information is available at the following links:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/afcars/guide/index.htm>

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/afcars/review.htm>

***We appreciate your continued partnership in working with us to improve Ohio's Child Welfare system and the outcomes for those we serve.***